

Lt. F. W. Loops
480th Sqdn., 336 Bomb Grp.
Avon Park, Fla.



Air Mail

Mr. + Mrs. Charles E. Loops
5418 - 13th St., N.W.
Washington, D.C.

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THE AVON PARK BOMBING RANGE
AVON PARK, FLORIDA

Thursday
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Hello Folks.-

Solly day but the time does get away, doesn't it? - The first of January seems an awful long time ago - but yet it doesn't seem as if enough time has passed for it to be well into February either! Oh, well - when you're just "vacationing" in Florida - you know how it is.-

See, - you folks have had quite a touch of winter, haven't you? - It seems every letter I've gotten from Sister lately, has mentioned snow & sleet. - Even Daddy's last week. - Can't you quiet the tempests and have a little sunshine? Our days here remain about the same. - The nights get too much on the chilly side - and the day time gets most too warm in the late afternoon, especially. - In the mornings - such as now - it is usually much warmer outside than it is in the barracks. - Especially when you have a "Lake side" exposure like mine. - all set back in the palm trees! - (ahem).

Our flying is not much around here. - I've been scheduled to fly so seldom, I've gone along on several trips just for a ride and to get off the ground! - We only get credit for flying time when we are an actual pilot or copilot, - so I just managed to get in enough time to collect my "flying pay" - or will when I get paid. - It seems most unusual to spend such a little time flying. - It's beginning to worry me now! That's one reason I know I'm feeling better - cause here to fore I've been content to just "sit" and let others fly! In fact, I'm afraid the fact I've so little time in might make a copilot out of me. There's all sorts of screwy things in the air and we have been trying to figure things out. ⁴⁴They've changed the whole system of doing things. - They've even made crews out of our sqdn. and are going all the way now - even while the pilot is learning to fly the plane!

As you remember, they took practically all our "bunch" and made copilots out of them, - with the exception of a few. - Well, the few of us ⁴⁴don't know ~~the~~ what's happening. - So far, - the 434 class has graduated and reported for duty and have been assigned to new crews while the "bunch of us" haven't been assigned - in fact - our names are on no list that we can find! - (We are the lost sheep!) The old "grapevine" has it that some of us with more time - will stay here and be checked out as first pilots, - while the ones with less time - will go as copilots to the next squadron with our recently "check out" pilots! - Then, I'm afraid, I'll



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AVON PARK, FLORIDA

be sent. - Tho. - they tell us in reality - it makes no difference. - The new set up means that by the time we get thru our training here - even the copilots will be checked out and will have a plane + crew of their own when they go into service. Due to a new tactical set up - some types of planes won't need both pilots + copilot - so someone else can do the few duties of the copilot. - This way - if it works - will relieve the pilot shortage somewhat - and that seems to be a bottle-neck, so to speak!

Friday - Feb. 5th -

So what - I reported to the flight line yesterday and found Frank's name up for a transfer to the 480th squadron! I knew I felt something in the wind! And the set up is as I said. - We act as copilots thru training - and by the time we finish we are automatically first pilots. - receiving a plane and crew either here - ~~at~~ our next post! - In lots of ways I don't like it, & in others, think it will be much better. - At least we will be doing something.

I've made friends with a 1st Lt. who was transferred here shortly after us. - He has had several years flying experience including ^{being} an instructor at

a basic school and flying Douglas transports & stuff. He has already checked out and was transferred with me as a first pilot - tho I wasn't lucky enough to be made his copilot, damn it! - Anyway - as I started to say - he thinks I'll learn just as much if not more, learning it this way than had I remained in the 478th. He should know - and I hope he's right. - As much as I hate some things, the way they happen I always try to think they happen for the best. - It's mostly always worked out like that before.

My first pilot seems to know his stuff. - He's had quite some time in the 26's - having been a copilot himself. - So - guess we'll get along swell and I should be able to learn lots from him.

Have you gotten the oranges & grapefruit yet. - I don't know how the grapefruit ~~was~~ - but the sample I had of the oranges - well - they're "a bit of all right." These particular kind of oranges are called "Temple's" I believe. - They had lots of different kinds - but the man said that those were about the best all around oranges. - I didn't send any tangerines. Those he had weren't too good - and I was reading in the paper where the tangerines weren't shipping so well this year due to too much rain or somethin'. - I don't know - I only fly airplanes.

And the candy, Ma, - did you like that kind? I just bought it on the spur of the moment. - He can get all of that we want - and as I saw it. - I remembered Sister's saying you hadn't had any since your



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Christmas supply ran out. - Got the "semi-sweet" kind 'cause if I remember correctly, - believe it or not, - the other is too sweet for you! - I can't imagine you ever turning any down for that reason, - but if I could, - I thought I might get something more up your alley! Let me know if the "kind" suits, cause you can never tell, - I might get another "spur".

Got a package of cookies from Marion the other day. - They are "tell house" and really hit the spot. The others of course helped me finish them, so they didn't last long enough to get stale! - (Tho I've still a few hidden away!) Sister - as far as I know my diet is unlimited - the doctor didn't tell me to eat again - but he said I was cured - so what I eat is my own idea!

Oh, oh - forgot. - this new schedule of mine calls for P.T. - Oh, me. - I haven't had any since I left Lubbock so guess I'll really be sore for fair. - I was supposed to start today - but I didn't go - I'm putting it off as long as I can - tho I know once I get broken into it again, I'll feel better for it.

Guess I've written all I know for this time. - I'm glad Henry + Phyl are getting an apartment of their own, for I know that's what they wanted - but I wonder what happens to "Pickle Russ"? - Would like to have

seen Sarah's surprised look, too. - She must really
been talking to let all that slip upon her!

Bye for now - and

Love,
Frank

P.S. - Don't forget - 480th Squadron. - Got a letter from Roy
the other day. - He is stationed in Jacksonville, Fla. - Seems
to like his work - but they're undermanned - so his
work is kinda hard on him. - Maybe I'll see him. - He
often fly up to Jacksonville - but never do I remember
anyone landing. - It seems they're working on the runways
or something, - and it takes such a long one for these
ships.